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REGION 12
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National Trends in Formative Assessment Support

Scott Reynolds, Lee J. Rutledge, Jeff Edmison
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Overview and Purpose

In its work with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Region 12 Comprehensive Center scanned state education agencies (SEAs) across the United States in search of supports related to formative assessment. DESE seeks to gain a national perspective of formative assessment trends at the SEA level, in support of its priority to put valuable student learning data in the hands of teachers of all grades and content areas to inform their instruction.

Defining Formative Assessment

Definitions of formative assessment can vary and focus on different and important aspects of formative assessment. In the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), formative assessment appears as part of a balanced assessment system (ESSA, 2015, p. 80). This scan takes an inclusive approach to the term formative assessment—meaning any assessment that takes on a formative purpose to inform instruction during the school year can serve as a formative assessment.

In seeking to define formative assessment at a state level, the next section provides a potential definition from a group focused on formative assessment.

Potential Definition of Formative Assessment for SEAs

A group of sixteen states has come together to advance formative assessment at the SEA level through developing resources, sharing initiatives, and building capacity (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2019).¹ They are known collectively as the Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers (FAST) State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS). Their definition below could serve as a potential working SEA definition of formative assessment based on current research, theory, and practice (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2018):

Formative assessment is a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become more self-directed learners.

Effective use of the formative assessment process requires students and teachers to integrate and embed the following practices in a collaborative and respectful classroom environment:

- *Clarifying learning goals and success criteria within a broader progression of learning;*
- *Eliciting and analyzing evidence of student thinking;*
- *Engaging in self-assessment and peer feedback;*
- *Providing actionable feedback; and*
- *Using evidence and feedback to move learning forward by adjusting learning strategies, goals, or next instructional steps.*

¹ The Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers (FAST) State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) includes sixteen states: Arkansas, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Process or Product

In reviewing how the fifty states and District of Columbia approach formative assessment, the language and supports, at times, speak to formative assessment as a process, and at other times, refer to formative assessment as a product. While the word “assessment” often connotes a measure or product demonstrating student learning, the FAST SCASS definition clearly indicates there are important instructional actions that accompany the measure. Both ideas have merit. Kerns (2015) lays out a similar viewpoint in his blog post *Is formative assessment a tool or a process, and what makes it good?* stating, “We need both, in balance.” Educators not only need measures to recognize student learning progress, but also instructional options they can leverage to advance student learning in light of what those measures indicate.

Methodology

The scan focuses on formative assessment supports offered at the SEA level that are based on publicly available information published on SEA websites. As mentioned, the scan takes an inclusive approach to formative assessment—it includes any supports for assessments that can serve a formative purpose. The scan does not include end-of-year or end-of-course summative assessments. The scan includes findings from the fifty United States and the District of Columbia. For the purpose of this scan, the District of Columbia is referred to as a state.

Reviewers searched SEA websites for general terms related to formative assessment such as benchmark assessment, diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, interim assessment, and progress monitoring. Reviewers also focused the scan on terms related to early childhood grades and eight major content areas: arts, career and technical education, English language arts, health and physical education, mathematics, science, social studies, and world languages.

To frame the document, the scan first presents common themes that emerged during the review. A series of supports by specific content areas as well as in early childhood follows, where information about the identified area appears with an illustrative example from one of the SEAs. The document then portrays four categories of professional learning evident from the scan, again with information about the category followed by an SEA example. From there the document shows efforts where states have come together in support of formative assessment, followed by unique approaches from individual SEAs. The references near the end of the document contain links to the resources and information contained in this report. The appendix provides a granular look by state of each category of support found in the scan.

Limitations: Given the variability of website layouts, terminology, and updates, and that not all of an SEA’s supports always have an online presence, it is important to acknowledge the scan has its limitations. Rather than a conclusive inventory of all formative assessment supports an SEA has put forth, the scan provides a broad vantage point from which to see patterns and unique approaches SEAs are taking with regard to formative assessment for a particular moment in time.

Common Themes

States gear formative assessment supports to equip classroom teachers directly

A key message drawn from the scan is that classroom instruction takes center stage when it comes to formative assessment. Whether through videos showing classroom examples of formative assessment processes, the tools that guide teachers while respecting their unique contexts, or customizable options for searching supports by grade and content area, classroom teachers are the primary audience of the state supports. This focus helps to ensure formative assessment serves its primary purpose: to inform classroom teachers of student learning progress, and to enable informed instructional decisions. When aggregated, formative assessment data at the school, district, or regional level can inform larger efforts—though should not supersede the vital role it plays for teachers and students.

States recognize the importance of professional learning as it relates to formative assessment

Almost every SEA provides professional learning related to formative assessment, and in most cases through multiple methods. The professional learning supports take various forms including modules, publications, tools, staff, and workshops, and address a variety of content areas and grade levels. The supports build educator capacity to recognize where students are in their learning and how to use that information to make instructional decisions. Such investments in professional learning speak to the commitment of SEAs to build strong formative assessment practices statewide.

States value collaboration when supporting formative assessments

States offer collaborative opportunities to engage with formative assessment at a variety of levels. Some states select in-state leaders to work as a part of a collaborative team to build exemplary assessments and guidance for fellow educators. Other states offer teachers opportunities to collaborate in workshop settings to connect with and learn from peers about formative assessment. State leaders also connect with leaders in other states or organizations to enrich the supports they provide to educators. Regardless of the format, it is clear SEAs find value in bringing educational staff together to focus on formative assessment.

Formative Assessment in “Tested” Areas

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) calls for summative statewide measurement of student learning in three content areas: reading or language arts—for which this scan uses the term “English language arts,” mathematics, and science (ESSA, 2015, pp. 25–26). As mentioned, ESSA also cites formative assessment as being a component of a balanced assessment system. For the “tested” areas that have summative testing requirements, states often provide sample measures of student learning to support educators’ use of formative assessment. The measures can be stand-alone or embedded within a lesson or unit. The measures can include published released items from summative assessments, online item banks, or complete and ready-to-administer assessments.

Those who develop the sample measures include SEA-level staff, teacher leaders, or outside vendors. The sample measures usually align to at least one learning standard for students and can serve a variety of purposes. Below are key purposes for teachers and their instruction:

- The measures themselves unpack some or all of the content within a standard, allowing educators see what learning a standard can look like and how students may apply that learning.
- Student responses to the measures demonstrate the degree of learning students have achieved, individually or as a group.
- Student responses can also indicate points of struggle or success in the learning progression, informing the teacher of individual or collective next steps for effective instruction.

The following sections include general notes on the three tested content areas and examples of sample measures provided by SEAs that can serve formative assessment purposes.

English Language Arts

Under federal requirements, students must take a summative assessment in English language arts (ELA) each year in grades 3 through 8 and at least once during grades 9 through 12 (ESSA, 2015). The largest collective set of standards in use by states is the *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts* (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d.).

States often include released items and text selections from summative assessments that educators can use as formative measures of student learning. Minnesota provides released items and passage sets that were previously used on the state ELA assessments (Minnesota Department of Education, n.d.-a). Figure 1 presents a sample item that aligns to grade 10 reading that measures a student's ability to identify textual evidence in support of an argument.

Figure 1. Formative Assessment Item for Grade 10 Reading in Minnesota

Students read a four page excerpt from a proposal for \$500,000 to bring library services to underserved communities. The excerpt has a Lexile of 1270 and a word count of 1023. Below is a corresponding question asked of students related to the proposal:

Which detail from the grant proposal represents the strongest argument for the construction of a public library?

- A. *Fairview residents deserve a library that is within walking distance of area schools.*
- B. *A public library may influence companies to move their operations to Fairview.*
- C. *Authors will be given opportunities to read their works to residents of Fairview.*
- D. *A public library will address multiple needs of people in Fairview.*

Note. From *Grade 10 Reading MCA Released Passage Set: "The Fairview Library Project,"* by the Minnesota Department of Education, n.d.-b, p. 18 (https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE074027&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary).

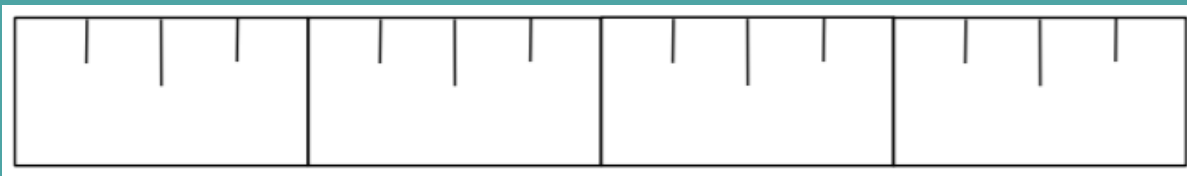
Mathematics

Like ELA, students must also take a mathematics summative assessment each year in grades 3 through 8 and at least once during grades 9 through 12 (ESSA, 2015). Most states offer sample measures in mathematics similar to those offered in ELA by way of sample measures. In terms of standards that formative assessments measure, the largest collective set of mathematics standards in use by states is the *Common Core State Standards for Mathematics* (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d.).

As an example of a formative measure for mathematics, the New York State Education Department has provided a set of curricular modules for mathematics. The state places a variety of formative assessment measures within the modules. Figure 2 comes from a module for grade 3 mathematics. The unit calls the measure an “exit ticket” which appears at the end of a lesson with the following objective for the lesson: Create ruler with 1-inch, $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch, and $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch intervals, and generate measurement data.

Figure 2. Exit Ticket for Grade 3 Mathematics in New York State

Davon marks a 4 inch paper strip into equal parts as shown below.



- A. Label the whole and quarter inches on the paper strip.
- B. Davon tells his teacher that his paper strip measures 4 inches. Sandra says it measures 16 quarter inches. Explain how the two measurements are the same. Use words, picture, or numbers.

Note. From *Mathematics Curriculum: Grade 3, Module 6*, by the New York State Education Department, 2015, p. 73 (<https://www.engageny.org/resource/grade-3-mathematics-module-6/file/14576>). CC BY-NC-SA.

Science

Federal requirements mandate that states summatively measure student learning in science at least once during grades 3 through 5, at least once during grades 6 through 9, and again during grades 10 through 12 (ESSA, 2015). Similar to ELA and mathematics, most states offer sample measures for science. As for science standards in use across the country, about 20 states use the *Next Generation Science Standards* (NGSS) for their science standards (National Science Teaching Association, n.d.).

To illustrate a formative assessment measure for science, the New Jersey Department of Education links educators to the Stanford NGSS Assessment Project. One of their instructionally-embedded assessments focuses on earth science for middle school students. Figure 3 includes an excerpt from the assessment anchored in performance expectation MS-ESS2-1: Develop a model to describe the cycling of Earth’s materials and the flow of energy that drives this process.

Figure 3. Formative Assessment for Middle School Science in New Jersey

*Part C: Presenting your model
Work individually*



Sloths are mammals that live in tropical climates of Central and South America. They spend nearly all their time on tree branches, hanging on with their long claws. Sloths need the warm temperatures and the trees found in tropical rain and cloud forests to survive. Before the Amazon region had the warm, wet climate that allowed the rainforests to grow, sloths did not live in this region at all.

Construct an argument to support a claim about one way that the Andes Mountains influenced the sloths living in the Amazon rainforest. This argument should use evidence from your model to support your claim.

Note. From Student Instructions: Evolution of the Andes, by the Stanford NGSS Assessment Project, n.d., p. 6 (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Be8qn42XUEKpTuQjBQko8naGb02mhMyu/view>). CC BY 4.0.

Additional Content Areas and Grades

Student learning is not limited to grades and content areas that are tested under federal requirements. In addition to the areas of ELA, mathematics, and science, the scan includes five content area categories: arts education, career and technical education, health and physical education, social studies, and world languages. Early childhood is also a category in the scan, which refers to the grade levels and programs occurring before grade 3.

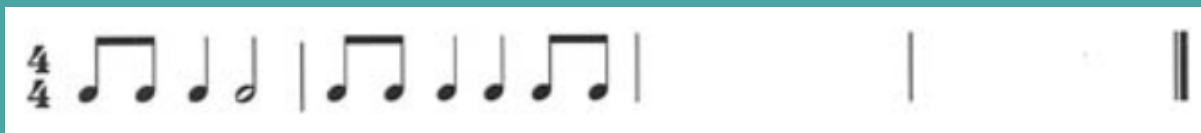
Arts Education

Arts education usually includes four categories: dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. Thirteen states provide specific formative assessment supports for arts education: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Ohio, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

As an example, the Montana Office of Public Instruction links educators to resources provided by the Institute of Education Sciences on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Figure 4 is a sample item for Grade 8 music measuring the following: Use notation to write an ending to a rhythmic pattern.

Figure 4. Formative Assessment Item for Grade 8 Music in Montana

For question 8, you are to write an ending for the rhythmic pattern you see below. You will hear it played two times. After you hear the rhythmic pattern, write an ending to the pattern in the empty measures printed in your test booklet. The music that you write should make the rhythm sound finished. You may use notes or rests in your answer, but do not copy any of the measures that are already used in the music. Make sure that the ending that you write has the correct number of beats.



The resource includes a sample student response for educators to demonstrate what the highest level of student performance on the item can look like:



Note. From *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2016 Arts Assessment: Question ID: 2016-8A5 #9 UE000C8*, by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2016 (<https://nces.ed.gov/NationsReportCard/nqt/Search>).

Career and Technical Education

Career and technical education (CTE) measures typically align to industry standards. States often build career pathways towards certification standards, with an emphasis on students demonstrating mastery to warrant certification. States that provide supports for formative assessment during the year include Alabama, California, Colorado, North Carolina, and Wisconsin.

As an example of formative assessment support for CTE, the California Department of Education provides a framework for teachers of CTE and embeds formative assessment supports within the framework. The CTE framework outlines fifteen industry sectors (California Department of Education, 2007, p. 138).² The example in Figure 5 aligns to the marketing, sales, and service industry sector. It contains a rubric excerpt on how well students use market research to develop marketing strategies for a product.

² The CTE framework from the California Department of Education identifies fifteen industry sectors: Agriculture and Natural Resources; Arts, Media, and Entertainment; Building Trades and Construction; Education, Child Development, and Family Services; Energy and Utilities; Engineering and Design; Fashion and Interior Design; Finance and Business; Health Science and Medical Technology; Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation; Information Technology; Manufacturing and Product Development; Marketing, Sales, and Service; Public Services; and Transportation.

Figure 5. Excerpt from Performance Task Rubric for CTE in California

The five part performance task focuses on entrepreneurship and requires students to design, conduct, and analyze a market survey to inform the development of a 30 second radio advertisement for a fictional product.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Advanced</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Unacceptable</i>
MSS B4.4: Understand how market research is used to develop strategies for marketing products or services in a small business. (50 points)	Market survey has nine+ questions and 60+ responses; data are correctly and thoroughly analyzed; accurate data analysis is used creatively in commercial; report shows insight into the process. (50 points)	Market survey has eight questions and 50 responses; data are correctly analyzed; data analysis is used accurately in commercial; report accurately reflects the process. (45 points)	Market survey has four to seven questions and 30–49 responses; data are correctly analyzed; data analysis is used in commercial; report accurately reflects the process in most part. (40 points)	Market survey has fewer than four questions, or questions are duplicative; there are fewer than 30 responses; data are correctly analyzed in part but not used effectively in commercial; report does not reflect the process. (35 points)

Note. From *Career Technical Education Framework for California Public Schools: Grades Seven Through Twelve*, by the California Department of Education, 2007, pp. 48–49 (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/sf/documents/cteframework.pdf>).

Early Childhood

While required summative assessments do not occur until grade 3, there is much learning that occurs before third grade. Most states encourage or require the use of a diagnostic or screening assessment to gauge student learning and readiness by the time they begin kindergarten. These assessments can include a portfolio of educator observations and real-time assessments that emphasize literacy awareness as well as social and emotional development. Some states provide additional formative assessment support in other early learning areas, such as the arts.

As an example, the Michigan Department of Education links educators to a Michigan Arts Education Instruction and Assessment resource that includes performance assessments. Figure 6 depicts an exemplar for kindergarten that aligns to the following performance standard: Students can identify and apply various techniques, symbols, and materials to achieve desired effects when communicating ideas visually.

Figure 6. Exemplar for Kindergarten Visual Arts in Michigan

Students listen to musical selections and use art techniques to make marks that express feelings or movements suggested by the music.



Student used a variety of techniques (color, shape, line, and pattern) to communicate the music visually.

Note. From *Expressing Music through Art*, by Michigan Arts Education Instruction & Assessment, n.d. (<https://maeia-artsednetwork.org/assessment/expressing-music-through-art/>).

Health and Physical Education

Each of the fifty states has an organization affiliated with the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE, n.d.-a). SHAPE promotes a common set of health and physical education standards (SHAPE, n.d.-b). While more states offer summative measures in health and physical education than formative assessment supports, states that provide formative assessment supports for health and physical education include Alabama, California, Colorado, Florida, Maine, Ohio, and Vermont.

To illustrate an example of formative assessment support for health and physical education, Figure 7 contains an excerpt of a preschool assessment from the Alabama State Department of Education to measure student performance in adapted physical education throughout the school year.

Figure 7. Excerpt from Preschool Adapted Physical Education Assessment in Alabama

- 0 Points Not attempted physical education tasks, activities, and expectations stated in standard
 1 Point Attempted physical education tasks, activities, and expectations state in standard
 2 Points Performs most physical education tasks, activities, and expectations stated in standard
 3 Points Masters all physical education tasks, activities, and expectations stated in standard

Testing Descriptors for Non Ambulatory Students	Initial Evaluation	Progress Monitor at End of			
Fine Motor Skills		1 st 9 Weeks	2 nd 9 Weeks	3 rd 9 Weeks	4 th 9 Weeks
Palmar grasp (holds an object in the left palm by wrapping fingers and thumb around it from one side)					
Palmar grasp (holds an objective in the right palm by wrapping fingers and thumb around it from one side)					
Pincer grasp (holds object between right hand thumb and index finger)					
Pincer grasp (holds object between left hand thumb and index finger)					

Note. From *Preschool Adapted Physical Education Assessment*, by the Alabama State Department of Education, n.d. (<https://www.alsde.edu/sec/isvcs/hpe/Process/Preschool%20Assessment.pdf#search=progress%20monitor>).

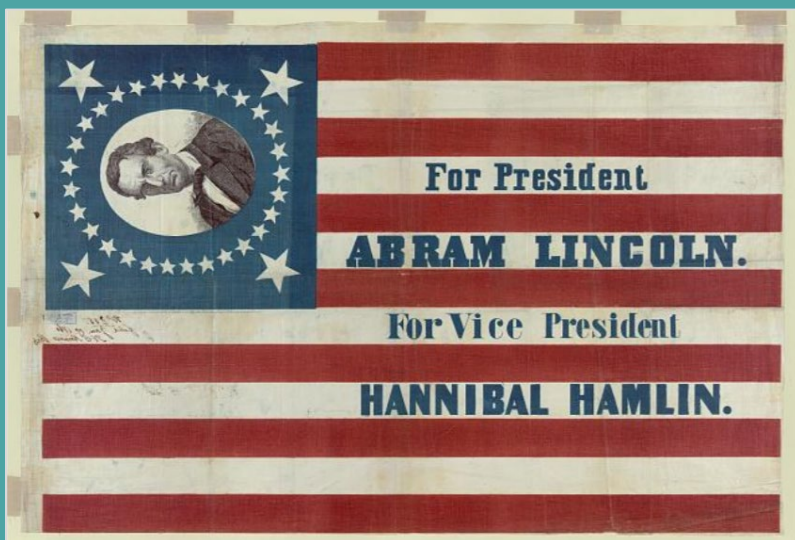
Social Studies

Though social studies does not have federal requirements for testing under ESSA, it is often included as one of the “core four” content areas along with ELA, mathematics, and science. Perhaps that is why twenty-four states provide formative assessment support specific to social studies at a state level.

One such example of formative assessment support for social studies comes from the Maine Department of Education. The SEA links educators to a project from Southern Illinois University that provides primary source assessments for various standards in literacy in social studies (2020). Figure 8 is a high school example measuring the following standard: Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Figure 8. Primary Source Assessment Item for High School Social Studies in Maine

*For president, Abram Lincoln. For vice president, Hannibal Hamlin
1860*



How is the use of the American Flag important to the campaign poster? (CCSS.ELA.RH.11 12.3)

- A. *It makes the campaign poster look more appealing.*
- B. *It made sense for the time period.*
- C. *It has no significance to the campaign poster.*
- D. *It shows that Lincoln is a true supporter of America.*

Note. From *Assessing with Primary Sources: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3*, by the Southern Illinois University, n.d. (<https://educatingwithevidence.siu.edu/common/documents/standard-pdfs/4-civil-war-reconstruction/civil-war-ccss.rh.11-12.3.pdf>).

World Languages

Over 40 states have used the framework of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL, n.d.) for student learning standards when learning a new language. Ten states have included specific supports to formatively assess student learning of a new language: California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Ohio, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

As an example, Figure 9 is an excerpt of a rubric from the Delaware Department of Education to assess interpersonal communication with regard to comprehensibility.

Figure 9. Excerpt from Rubric for Comprehensibility in World Languages in Delaware

	<i>Starting</i>	<i>Novice Low</i>	<i>Novice Mid</i>	<i>Novice High</i>
<p><i>How well am I understood during this task?</i></p> <p>Comprehensibility</p>	<i>I cannot produce any sounds unique to the target language that could be understood by a target language speaker.</i>	<i>I can pronounce very few sounds unique to the target language and can only be understood with great effort.</i>	<i>I can pronounce in isolation some sounds unique to the target language and be understood with difficulty by someone accustomed to a language learner.</i>	<i>I can mostly be understood by someone accustomed to a language learner. I can pronounce in isolation many sounds unique to the target language, but mispronunciation during speech or the use of longer sentences often result in a breakdown in comprehensibility.</i>

Note. From *Delaware Integrated World Language Performance Assessments: Interpersonal Speaking (H1)*, by the Delaware Department of Education, n.d. (<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib/DE01922744/Centricity/Domain/139/L1PresentationalSpeakingScoringRubric.pdf>).

Professional Learning for Formative Assessment

This section includes four categories of professional learning that states provide in support of formative assessment: modules and workshops, publications, staff, and tools. Each category description follows with an example from an SEA.

Modules and Workshops

A number of states contract with outside vendors, some provide state-specific modules or workshops to support formative assessment, and others do both. The modules and workshops can take place online, in person, or in a hybrid format. The facilitation level can range from intensive, to light, or even self-paced for an individual teacher or team of teachers.

As an example, the Iowa Department of Education provides Assessment for Learning modules on the following topics (n.d.):

- Foundation
- Learning Intentions
- Eliciting Evidence/Instructional Modifications
- Descriptive Feedback

- Self- and Peer-Assessment
- Collaborative Classroom Climate
- Putting It Into Practice
- Module Demo

Publications

State education agencies provide a variety of published material to support formative assessment, including guides, topic-specific papers, catalogs, and approved lists and vendors.

The Mississippi Department of Education (n.d.) has published a page on their website with the question: *How often should progress monitoring be performed?* In response, they provide the following guidance related to their multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS):

According to the law, teachers must collect baseline data in August via a state-approved screener and monitor the progress of each student at the middle and end of the year. In accordance with MTSS guidelines, it is recommended that progress monitoring occur according to the following timeline:

- *Tier I – Formal monthly progress monitoring*
- *Tier II – Bi-weekly progress monitoring; and,*
- *Tier III – Weekly progress monitoring.*

Staff

Some state education agencies provide personnel to support formative assessment. This can include outside experts to bring their perspectives through webinars or facilitated conversation, and can also include within-state experts. Several states have dedicated staff or contacts who directly support formative assessment efforts.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has a dedicated position for supporting formative assessment. Within the Office of Student Assessment (OSA), the position title is OSA Education Consultant, Formative Assessment (n.d.).

Tools

State departments of education have developed a variety of tools to support formative assessment. Such tools can include protocols, templates, rubrics, videos, or other resources to help stakeholders conduct, learn from, and support formative assessment efforts. An example of a tool is a set of videos of educators focusing on various aspects of formative assessment for ELA. Oregon worked with experts to develop open-licensed formative assessment videos of Arizona teachers (Arizona Department of Education, 2017). Each video contains a transcript and viewing guide. The videos center on two classrooms: an elementary classroom focused on reading fluency and a secondary classroom focused on writing. The videos are segmented into the following topics:

- Formative Assessment Overview
- Learning Goals and Success Criteria
- Eliciting Evidence
- Modeling Effective Feedback
- How We Learn
- Peer Feedback
- Self-Assessment

Figure 10 is an image from the elementary reading fluency lesson where students are self-assessing their progress as a part of the formative assessment process.

Figure 10. Image from Video on Student Self Assessment in ELA from Oregon and Arizona

Smoothly I was able to read the words correctly.	😊	😊	😊
Rate I read not too fast, but not too slowly either.	😊	😊	😊
Expression My reading sounded like talking with feeling.	😊	😊	😊
Meaning I used punctuation to guide my reading.	😊	😊	😊

What is your next step for improvement?

all the time some of the time not all of the time

My step for next time is I will read with expression all the time. Also I will read smoothly all the time.

Note. From *Self-Assessment in an Elementary Fluency Lesson*, by the Oregon Department of Education, 2018 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLnWhRvTkFc&feature=youtu.be>). CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Multi-State Efforts

The following examples highlight a few prominent efforts that connect formative assessment work across multiple states.

FAST SCASS

As mentioned in the “Defining Formative Assessment” section, a group of sixteen states has come together to advance formative assessment at the SEA level through developing resources, sharing initiatives, and building capacity. Along with several partners, the Council of Chief State School Officers facilitates this workgroup known as FAST SCASS. The collaborative engages regularly with national experts to address priorities related to formative assessment. For 2019–2020, priorities included enhancing formative assessment expertise, continuing systems thinking around scaling up, expanding case study resources, and exploring how member states can support state, district,

and school-level leaders in their work with teachers. A variety of supports such as their Formative Assessment Rubrics, Reflection and Observation Tools to Support Professional Reflection on Practice, case studies, and policy briefs are available through the collaborative and are also posted on several SEA websites of member states. From the available 2019–2020 information, the sixteen member states include Arkansas, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah, Wisconsin, and Wyoming (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2019).

Mathematics Assessment Project

A multi-state and multi-national effort in formative assessment for mathematics, known as the Mathematics Assessment Project, leverages the collaboration of the University of California, Berkeley, the Shell Center at the University of Nottingham, and support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The project aims to bring the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics to life for teachers and students. The project has developed 100 formative assessment lessons that take the form of *Classroom Challenges*, which span grades 6 through high school (Mathematics Assessment Resource Service, n.d.). The Kentucky Department of Education has been a participant in the project and has developed more than two dozen formative assessment lessons in similar fashion for mathematics in kindergarten through grade 5 (2019).

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

As of June 2020, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) includes the thirteen member states of California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, Vermont, and Washington, and also the Bureau of Indian Education and the U.S. Virgin Islands (SBAC, n.d.-a). This consortium provides various supports to educators, and is largely known for their end-of-year tests, which measure achievement and growth in ELA and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and high school. To support formative assessment practices aligned to the summative assessments, SBAC provided a digital library to member states that included sample assessment items, online assessments, and other resources that officially retired May 28, 2020. A new website, Tools for Teachers (<https://www.smarterbalanced.org/tools-for-teachers/>), takes its place. A signature feature of Tools for Teachers is the embedded formative process which focuses on (1) where students are in their learning, (2) where they are going, and (3) how they will get there. Preview information for the new website indicates there will be differentiated instructional resources, student performance progressions, and also formative and accessibility strategies that can be used as a part of instruction (SBAC, n.d.-b).

Other Examples of Interest

The scan calls out a few additional examples of state support for formative assessment below. Each is innovative in some regard and could help inform an approach to formative assessment at a statewide level.

Colorado: Performance Assessments for All Content Areas

The Colorado Department of Education has identified an array of performance assessments for all eight major content areas (2020). Totalling more than 200, the performance assessments measure a group of standards taught during a particular course. As such, they are less summative in nature than typical end-of-course assessments and can serve a formative purpose to measure learning for a selection of course standards. To continue to increase the number of high-quality assessments, Colorado has put forth a four-part process that school, district, and regional leaders can use to develop high-quality performance assessments (2019). Of particular note is Colorado's Assessment Review Tool, which emphasizes features of quality assessments and includes an interactive element for educators to use as they build and reflect on the quality of performance assessments (Colorado Department of Education, 2020).

Indiana: Formative (Interim) Assessment Grant

Indiana offers a formative assessment grant opportunity to all public school corporations, charter schools, and accredited nonpublic schools for students in kindergarten through grade 10. For the 2020–2021 school year, the State of Indiana has allocated more than \$11 million to the effort. The Indiana Department of Education indicates that any eligible school that successfully completes an application will receive funds, as compared to competitive grant opportunities (n.d.). Below are the five categories of allowable uses for the funds:

- Approved mathematics and/or ELA interim assessment programs
- Professional development to foster a deeper understanding of assessments, data-driven instruction, and assessment literacy
- Diagnostic analysis of student performance
- Student performance reports and analysis for teachers, students, and parents
- Differentiated learning tools for educators, students, and parents that support areas of instructional need

Florida: Examples Vetted through Multiple Screens

Funded in part by the National Science Foundation, Florida has created an online toolbox of information, vetted resources, and interactive tools that helps educators deliver instruction. This online toolbox includes formative assessment support and brings together six key ideas: collaborate, plan, align, learn, motivate, and share (CPALMS). An introductory video for CPALMS indicates that the resource review process is the CPALMS difference. Each resource receives an average of five reviews before being posted, including at least one review from a peer educator and at least one review from a subject area expert. The review process also embeds professional learning for participating teachers, with anonymity to provide a safe and comfortable environment. The number of resources tagged with the term “formative assessment” in CPALMS exceeds 3,000, and includes resources for kindergarten through high school educators. Many of the formative assessment items are geared toward mathematics, and other formative assessment items include the content areas of the arts, ELA, health and physical education, science, and social studies (Florida State University, n.d.).

Georgia: Game-Based Formative Assessment

The Georgia Department of Education (GA DOE) has developed a game-based approach to formative assessment for students in grades 1 and 2. The games take place in a virtual environment known as Keenville, referring to the phrase “peachy keen” in the Peach State. As of the 2019–2020 school year, there are 16 games focusing on literacy and 15 games focusing on numeracy. Students log in to the district student information system to gain access, and detailed interactive dashboards are available to teachers, school administrators, and district administrators. Keenville is intended to assess what students have learned after instruction has taken place, is not to be used for high-stakes purposes, and gives educators real-time data to guide differentiated instructional practices for all students (GA DOE, n.d.).

Summary

States provide a variety of methods to support formative assessment. The supports can be general in nature or can target specific content and grade areas. In various instances, states come together to collaborate on their approach to formative assessment, while at other times states develop unique approaches for their educators. Overall, a few common themes characterize national trends in supporting formative assessment:

- States gear formative assessment supports to equip classroom teachers directly
- States recognize the importance of professional learning as it relates to formative assessment
- States value collaboration when supporting formative assessment

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Appendix: Formative Assessment Supports by State

The following table shows which types of supports appear by state. The Content and Grade Area Supports are categorized into the eight content areas referred to in this scan and also includes the early childhood category. The Professional Learning Supports are categorized into four headings: modules or workshops, publications, tools, and staff. Where evidence could be located for a particular type of support, it appears in the table.

State	Content and Grade Area Supports	Professional Learning Supports
1. Alabama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » CTE » Early Childhood » ELA » Health and Physical Education » Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications
2. Alaska	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Not found
3. Arizona	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Arts » ELA » Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Tools
4. Arkansas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics » Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications
5. California	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Arts » CTE » Early Childhood » ELA » Health and Physical Education » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies » World Languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Staff » Tools
6. Colorado	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Arts » CTE » Early Childhood » ELA » Health and Physical Education » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies » World Languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Staff » Tools
7. Connecticut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications » Staff » Tools

State	Content and Grade Area Supports	Professional Learning Supports
8. Delaware	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies » World Languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications » Staff » Tools
9. District of Columbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics » Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications
10. Florida	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Arts » Early Childhood » ELA » Health and Physical Education » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies » World Languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Tools
11. Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Staff » Tools
12. Hawaii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications » Staff » Tools
13. Idaho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications » Staff » Tools
14. Illinois	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Arts » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications
15. Indiana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics » World Languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Staff » Tools
16. Iowa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Staff

State	Content and Grade Area Supports	Professional Learning Supports
17. Kansas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Arts » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies » World Languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications
18. Kentucky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics » Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications » Staff » Tools
19. Louisiana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications » Tools
20. Maine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Early Childhood » ELA » Health and Physical Education » Mathematics » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Tools
21. Maryland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Tools
22. Massachusetts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Arts » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications » Tools
23. Michigan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Arts » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics » Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Staff » Tools
24. Minnesota	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics » Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Not found
25. Mississippi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics » Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications » Tools

State	Content and Grade Area Supports	Professional Learning Supports
26. Missouri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Arts » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Tools
27. Montana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Arts » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Staff » Tools
28. Nebraska	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Staff » Tools
29. Nevada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications » Staff » Tools
30. New Hampshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics » Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications » Tools
31. New Jersey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Tools
32. New Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics » Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops
33. New York	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Tools
34. North Carolina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » CTE » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics » Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Tools
35. North Dakota	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Not found

State	Content and Grade Area Supports	Professional Learning Supports
36. Ohio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Arts » Early Childhood » ELA » Health and Physical Education » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies » World Languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Tools
37. Oklahoma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications
38. Oregon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Staff » Tools
39. Pennsylvania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics » Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications » Tools
40. Rhode Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics » Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Tools
41. South Carolina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications » Tools
42. South Dakota	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Staff » Tools
43. Tennessee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Tools
44. Texas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications » Tools
45. Utah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Early Childhood » ELA » World Languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Staff » Tools

State	Content and Grade Area Supports	Professional Learning Supports
46. Vermont	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Arts » ELA » Health and Physical Education » Mathematics » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Staff » Tools
47. Virginia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies » World Languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications
48. Washington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Staff » Tools
49. West Virginia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Early Childhood » Social Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Publications » Staff » Tools
50. Wisconsin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Arts » CTE » Early Childhood » ELA » Mathematics » Science » Social Studies » World Languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications » Staff » Tools
51. Wyoming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ELA » Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modules or Workshops » Publications